

tions must obviously be part of the training curriculum for this type.

What is, however, entirely overlooked by the majority of people who have expressed their opinions is that the Reserve and other Service pupils are being taught not so much merely to fly as to fly the kind of aeroplane which is now going into service. For the civil pilot it is only fair to use a type of machine which is as simple and viceless as any can be; the machines he intends to fly later on are, too, designed solely to ensure safe and easy transport. The Service pupil, however, is being trained not for his own amusement but to prepare him for more and more heavily loaded types which may in no case be viceless and as the wing-loadings go up the need for thorough preparation becomes more and more important.

It is all very well and natural to be sentimental about pupils and, everything else being equal, it would certainly be kinder to train them on very easy aeroplanes. But even if each one of them carried out, say, fifty hours on some absolutely conventional, lightly loaded trainer with the easiest possible characteristics, he would still need to learn how to fly the modern type of semi-military aeroplane, and the probability is that it would be more difficult and dangerous to evolve an intermediate conversion course than it would be to train him from the word "go" on a machine designed to the new formula.

There might be some point in placing a minimum limit on the dual instruction provided—though such a course would tend to discourage the really proficient pupils—and there would be a great deal of point in insisting that certain types of advanced dual should be given more thoroughly. As it is, this advanced dual, given every few hours, is part and parcel of the curriculum of at least the best of the schools.

If we are to be really hard-hearted and matter-of-fact we might say with some justification that it is better that trainers rather than Service types should be wrecked. At least the chances of fatal injury are less certain. As we have said before, pupils are not being trained at the country's expense for their own amusement or delectation—they are being trained for possible emergency.

### *Dominion Pilots*

**P**OLITICALLY Canada and Australia are in very different case. Canada has no urgent defence problems, while in Australia such problems are very much alive. This is stressed by the attitudes of the two Dominions towards the supply of pilots for the Royal Air Force.

Hitherto all Dominions have encouraged their young men to come to Great Britain and serve in the R.A.F., but now Australia has announced that, owing to the need of expanding the R.A.A.F., she can send no more for at least two or three years. This decision does not in any way weaken the total air strength of the Empire; it merely means a somewhat greater concentration of that strength in the Pacific, where the R.A.A.F. forms, as it were, a reinforcement of the Singapore garrison. Singapore and the R.A.A.F. would certainly work in close collaboration in the event of trouble.

Canada, on the other hand, is one of the most tranquil parts of the world so far as external dangers are concerned. She is therefore prepared to train numbers of young Canadians, apparently at her own expense, and send them across the Atlantic to swell the ranks of the R.A.F. We alluded last week to the discussion between the Canadian Government and the Opposition on this point. It has now been made quite clear that the only difference between the two concerns the method of help, not the principle of helping. The method which Canada has chosen will relieve the Air Ministry of effort, and presumably of some expense. It is recognised that the training must be such as to satisfy R.A.F. standards. For this generous offer the whole Empire will be grateful to His Majesty's Government in Canada.

### *St. Simeon Stylites*

**I**N one of Rudyard Kipling's stories about the South African War an American character is made to remark that the British are far more afraid of being bored than of being killed. Mr. J. S. Sproule and Flt. Lt. W. B. Murray have done something to repudiate that reputation. To sit for twenty-two hours in a cramped sailplane on top of a rising current of air is a feat of endurance which must arouse admiring astonishment. Merely to have watched the slowly wheeling Falcon III for the duration of its record flight would have been more than most men, British or otherwise, would have cared to undertake.

Admittedly, the man who held the joystick had to keep his wits alert throughout his spell of duty, and there were moments of anxiety when the wind showed signs of dropping, which would have meant that all the previous endurance would have gone for naught. Judgment had to be exercised in smelling-out such rising currents as persisted, and this must have served to banish boredom for a time. But the sight of that line of Chiltern hills, with the bowl at one end of it, must have grown inexpressibly wearisome after hours of circling above it. The fall of night and the lighting of the hurricane lanterns along the ridge must have been exciting events.

The world's aeronautical knowledge has not been increased by this feat, but, at least, attention has been drawn to the gliding movement in Britain, and one world's record has been captured for this country. Congratulations are due to the much-enduring pilots.

### *Rules for Bombardment*

**M**R. J. M. SPAIGHT'S interesting article on "Bombing and International Law," which appears on page 38d of this issue shows the need for some new international legislation. It is not the case that once fighting has started all laws of war cease to be effective. Some rules we must have, and even in the Great War some rules were observed by all the belligerents. At the peace conference there was much talk of punishing war criminals, and though that talk came to naught, it may well happen that in the future some other victors may insist on exacting penalties from those who have broken the recognised rules. It is in the interests of the combatants as well as of the civil populations that definite rules should be drawn up to deal with the air arm.

Mr. Spaight points out that naval and military bombardments of cities have been recognised as legitimate warlike practice in the past. In his book *Air Power and the Cities* he goes very fully into the subject, and examines many instances, particularly of naval bombardments of coast towns. He points out, however, that in many, if not most, cases the naval commander tried to inflict as little harm as possible on the civil population while shelling the military objectives.

In the conflicts in Spain and China there seems ample evidence that many bomber pilots have not put any such restraint upon themselves. It is more than time that international law should stigmatise such promiscuous bombing as criminal. The more fanatical upholders of air power should be the less inclined to oppose such restrictions in view of the now clearly proved fact that such brutality fails to achieve the alleged object of breaking down the cities' will to resist.

### *Gosport*

**S**EPTEMBER, 1917, was the date when Gosport was "put on the map." Last Saturday may well be said to have been the date on which the name Gosport was underlined there. The affair at Brooklands, reported in this issue, was something more than a reunion of some of those who served as instructors at Gosport when the School of Special Flying was started there in 1917. It gave an opportunity to the outside world to find out something about how and why Gosport started and to discover to